Invitation to Islam

Sayyid Moustafa Al-Qazwini

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Invitation to Islam

:Writer

Fatma Saleh Sayyid Moustafa Al-
Qazwini

:Published in print

The Islamic Educational Center of Orange County

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Invitation to Islam

BOOK ID

Author(s): Sayyid Moustafa Al-Qazwini

Publisher(s): The Islamic Educational Center of Orange County

Category: General

Featured Category: Introducing Islam

point

An excellent introduction to 'What is Islam?', the main Islamic beliefs and practices, religious texts, as well as other Islamic issues such as marriage, social life, women .and law

Preface

As of June, ١٩٩٩, I will have lived five years in the United States of America. Through this time, I have met many intellectual, educated individuals who have inspired me to introduce the beautiful religion of Islam to the masses through speeches, writings, and articles. I also have had the honor of spending almost three years with our future .generation, the youth, in Southern California and other parts of the United States

The more time I spent discussing and debating aspects of Islam with them, the more I was convinced of the necessity to put the basic ideas of Islam on paper and introduce them to the ever-increasing number of youth who seek to discover the last revelation .of Allah to mankind

Through my work as a humble student and a preacher of Islam in the West, I realized that the Islamic centers and institutions have shortages and inefficiencies in the field of da'wah (the invitation to Islam). Although many valuable works have been done in this field, the literature is still insufficient to attract all the different people to the .simplicity and values that this message carries for humanity

Therefore, I decided to contribute according to my ability to do my

p: ١

share in spreading the word of Allah, a duty incumbent upon all Muslims. I hope Allah will accept this humble effort and count it for me on the Day when nothing will be of .aid except good deeds

.I would like to thank Sister Amina Inloes for her help in editing this work

May Allah continuously guide me and guide all the sincere brothers and sisters to His .righteousness and piety

Moustafa al-Qazwini

May ۶, ۱۹۹۹

Introduction

?What is Islam

Islam"(۱) means "submitting or surrendering one's will to the will of Allah".(۲)" Mankind naturally submits to Allah; this instinct was born with him on the day of his creation. In reality, the entire universe - the stars, the planets, and the oceans - .submits to the will of Allah through its ordered workings

Modern science calls this phenomenon "the laws of nature," but these laws of nature, from an Islamic perspective, are not just any laws of nature but the laws of Allah for nature. Human beings, as creatures of Allah who are in need of Him throughout their entire lives, must also surrender their wills and desires to the will of the Almighty, the .Creator

Submitting to Allah does not mean humiliating the individual self or denying the human intellect; rather, it means trusting in the knowledge, wisdom, and fairness of the Creator. People voluntarily give over their lives to others almost every day; for example, passengers embarking on an airplane place their lives in the hands of the pilot because of the pilot's knowledge, experience, and assumed

١- From the Arabic verb aslama.

٢- The Arabic word for God.

.goodwill

Similarly, friends trust friends, and if a wise, knowledgeable, rational, and good-intentioned friend invites another to go into the middle of the desert in the middle of a dark night, that person would follow because he knows that his friend would not endanger his life. The decision to trust a person with more knowledge is logical, and .so people do not abandon their own intellects by trusting in the wisdom of God

Islam" has other meanings, one of which is "to have peace." Allah has said in the" :Holy Qur'an

(He is Allah - there is no God but Him - the King, the Holy One, and the Peace." (٥٩:٢٣"

(And Allah invites to the abode of peace." (١٠:٢٥"

By its connotations of peace and safety, "Islam" indicates that the religion of Islam is free from any deficiencies or defects. As a religion, Islam is perfect because it was .ordained by Allah and not invented by humankind

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was the first person that God commanded to :(use the words "Islam" and "Muslim"(١

It [Islamic monotheism] is the religion of your father Abraham. He [Allah] has named" (you Muslims both before and in this [Qur'an]." (٢٢:٧٨

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim (submissive to" (Allah) and was not one of the polytheists." (٣:٦٧

Not only Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) but also all the sincere, truthful people after him called their religion "Islam." Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) says in the chapter of the

p: ٣

.Muslim" refers to a follower of the religion of Islam" -١

:"Qur'an named "Joseph

My Lord! You have given me authority and taught me the interpretation of things. O Creator of the heavens and earth! You are my guardian in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die as a Muslim, submitting to Your will, and join me with the righteous. (۱۲:۱۰۱)

:Thus Allah declares in the Qur'an

"Truly the religion before Allah is Islam." (۳:۱۹)

?Who are the Muslims

Muslims are the followers of the religion of Islam, i.e. those who submit to the will of Allah as explained in the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (S), the Messenger of Islam. The Muslim population today is about ۱.۲ billion and is spread over a vast range of races, nationalities, and cultures.

Approximately ۱۸٪ of the Muslims live in the Arab world, but the majority live in Asia and Africa. The country that has the largest Muslim population is Indonesia, and significant Muslim minorities exist in Russia, China, and Europe as well as North and South America. The Muslim population of the United States is estimated to be around ۶ million.

?How does Someone Become a Muslim

The basic requirement to become a Muslim is to say, "Ashhadu an laa ilaaha illa Allah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah," which means, "I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Anyone who says this phrase joins the ranks of the Muslim nations. However, saying this only begins the long physical and spiritual journey to practice all aspects of Islam in life and become one of

those whom the Qur'an terms "the faithful" (mu'min). Although this journey is long, its .rewards are numerous for those who embark on it with sincere will and intentions

Practicing Islam requires learning the Islamic ideas, teachings, and practices, and then adapting to them - a process that does require some sacrifice. The necessity of sacrifice, however, should not be a deterrent since the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) has said that whenever someone gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will .replace it with something better

Sincerity of belief also develops over time. When Prophet Muhammad (S) was first spreading the message of Islam, some people came to him and informed him that :they were believers. In reply, Allah revealed

Say: 'You believe not, but say, 'We have submitted in Islam,' for faith has not yet" (entered your hearts.'" (۴۹:۱۴

The first successor to the Holy Prophet, Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him), has described :the dynamic process of following Islam

I am defining Islam as no one has defined it before me: Islam is submission, submission is conviction, conviction is affirmation, affirmation is acknowledgement, acknowledgement is performance of obligations, and the performance of obligations (is good deeds.(۱

(Part ۱: Islamic Beliefs (the Pillars of Islam

(Monotheism: The Oneness of Allah (Tawhid .۱

point

Allah, or God, is the center of Muslim belief. Whereas certain religions focus on individuals, like Christianity focuses on Jesus (peace be upon him), Islam focuses solely on Allah. Although Muslims respect the divine prophets, the prophets - including .Prophet Muhammad (S) - are still only servants of Allah

The Qur'an itself speaks of the oneness

Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), saying ۱۲۵ -۱

:of God

Allah has borne witness that there is no God but Him - and the angels, and those with" knowledge also witness this. He is always standing firm on justice. There is no God but (Him, the Mighty, the Wise." (۳:۱۸

The oneness of Allah is not only a philosophical argument but is an affirmation that all :human beings declared before their souls came into their bodies

Remember] when your Lord brought forth the children of Adam from their loins and] made them testify over themselves, saying, "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes! We testify," lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Verily, we were unaware (of this." (۷:۱۷۲

Such was the covenant that Allah made with all people at the time of creation regardless of whether these same people now claim to believe in God or not. At that time, they proclaimed His majesty, His sovereignty, His power, and His absolute .oneness and transcendence

Likewise, all people today, regardless of their origins, are naturally inclined towards the idea that God is one and without partner. The Qur'an tells Prophet Muhammad :((peace be upon him

Set your face to the true religion [Islamic monotheism], the natural inclination (fitra) with which Allah has created mankind. [Let there be] no change in what Allah has (made; that is the straight religion, but most people do not understand. (۳۰:۳۰

Describing God

One of the shortest chapters of the Qur'an, "The Oneness of God"- Al-Tawhid, :Chapter ۱۱۲, summarizes the nature of God in five verses

In the name of

Allah, the most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Say, He is Allah, the One

Allah, the Eternal

He begets not, nor was He begotten

.And there is nothing at all comparable to Him

The most fundamental Islamic teachings about God are contained in these verses, i.e. that there is only one God Who is eternal, unique, and has no blood relation to any human beings. Different prophets also gave their own descriptions of God which are :also related in the Qur'an. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) says

(My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death." (۲:۲۵۸"

:After him, Moses (peace be upon him), when confronting the Pharaoh, says

(Our Lord is He Who gave each thing its form and nature then guided it aright." (۲۰:۵۰"

These two verses both describe Allah in His relation to human beings, but of course .Allah's being extends far beyond His relation to mankind

:Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) has also described Him thus

He who assigns to Him different conditions does not believe in His oneness, nor does he who likens Him grasp His reality. He who illustrates Him does not signify Him; he who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him. Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect of a cause. He works, but not with the help of instruments; He fixes .measures, but not with the activities of thinking; He is rich, but not by acquisition

Time does not keep company with Him, and

implements do not help Him. His being precedes time, His existence precedes non-existence, and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the senses, it is known that He has no senses. By the contraries in various matters, it is known that He has no contrary, and by the similarity between things it is known that there is nothing similar .to Him

He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture, and heat that of cold. He produces affection among inimical things.... He is not confined by limits nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of ....their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves

Through them, the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence, and through them He is guarded from the sight of the eyes.... He has not begotten anyone lest He be regarded as having been born. He has not been begotten, otherwise He would be contained within limits. He is too high to have sons.... Understanding cannot think of (Him so as to give Him shape....(١

:Allah expresses His own eternity and perpetuity Himself

Every thing on earth shall perish, but the face of Allah will remain, full of majesty and" (honor." (٥٥:٢۶-٢٧

The ٩٩ Names of Allah

(And to Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them." (٧:١٨٠"

Islamic tradition says that Allah has many different names representing different :aspects of His being, and ٩٩ of them are commonly recited together

English

.Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), sermon ١٨۶ -١

Arabic

The Merciful ar-rahim

The Beneficent ar-rahmaan

The Sovereign al-malik

The Holy al-quddus

The Peace as-salaam

The Guardian of Faith al-mu'min

The Protector al-muhaymin

The Mighty al-'aziz

The Compellor al-jabbar

The Majestic al-mutakabbir

The Creator

al-khaaliq

'The Evolver al-baari

The Fashioner al-musawwir

The Forgiver al-ghaffar

The Subduer al-qahhar

The Bestower al-wahhab

The Provider ar-razzaq

The Opener al-fattah

The Knowing al-'alim

The Constrictor al-qaabid

The Abaser al-khaafid

The Expander al-baasit

The Honorer al-mu'izz

The

'Exalter ar-raafi

'The Hearing as-sami

The Dishonorer al-mudhill

The Judge al-hakam

The Seeing al-basir

The Subtle al-latif

The Kind al-halim

The Just al-'adl

The Aware al-khabir

The All-Forgiving al-ghafur

The Great

al-'azim

The High al-'aliy

The Appreciative ash-shakur

The Preserver al-hafiz

The Immense al-kabir

The Reckoner al-hasib

The Maintainer al-muqit

The Generous al-karim

The Majestic al-jalil

The Responsive al-mujib

The Wise al-hakim

The Watchful ar-raqib

The All-Surrounding

'al-waasi

The Glorious al-majid

The Loving al-wadud

The Witness ash-shahid

The Resurrector al-baa'ith

The Truth al-haqq

The Trustee al-wakil

The Strong al-qawi

The Firm al-matin

The Praiseworthy al-hamid

The Guardian

al-wali

The Originator al-mubdi

The Reckoner al-muhsi

The Giver of Life al-muhyi

The Restorer al-mu'id

The Creator of Death al-mumit

The Living al-hayy

The Self-Subsisting al-qayyum

The Finder al-waajid

The Noble al-maajid

The Unique

al-waahid

The One al-ahad

The Eternal as-samad

The Able al-qadir

The Powerful al-muqtadir

The Expediter al-muqaddim

The Delayer al-mu'akhkhir

The First al-awwal

The Last

al-aakhir

The Manifest az-zaahir

The Hidden al-baatin

The Governor al-waali

The Exalted al-muta'ali

The Source of Goodness al-barr

The Acceptor of Repentance at-tawwab

The Avenger al-muntaqim

The Pardoner al-'afuw

The Compassionate ar-ra'uf

The Owner of Soverignty maalik al-mulk

The Lord of Majesty

dhul jalaali wal-ikraam

and Bounty

The Equitable al-muqsit

'The Gatherer al-jaami

The Self-Sufficient al-ghani

The Enricher al-mughni

'The Preventer al-mani

The Distresser ad-darr

'The Benefitor an-naafi

The Light an-nur

The Guide

al-haadi

'The Incomparable al-badi

The Everlasting al-baaqi

The Inheritor al-waarith

The Guide to the Right Path ar-rashid

The Patient as-sabur

(The Viewpoints of Islam and Christianity Regarding Allah (God

The distinguishing feature of Islam is its insistence on absolute monotheism and the forbidding of anything, at all, to be associated with God. This includes the refusal of the idea that Jesus (peace be upon him), the Messenger of God, was God. Allah says in :the Qur'an

Surely they have disbelieved who say that Allah is the Messiah [Jesus], the son of Mary. But the Messiah said, "O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Truly, whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and Fire will be his abode. And for the wrongdoers there

are no helpers. Surely, they have disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three," for there is no God but Allah Who is one. And if they do not cease what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall the disbelievers among them.... The Messiah, the son of Mary, was nothing other than a messenger; many were the messengers who passed before him. His mother was a woman of truth.... (۵:۷۲-۷۵)

Muslims believe that neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament had mentioned in any way that Jesus was the son of God. According to a contemporary American scholar, Barbara Brown:

The doctrine of divinity states that Jesus is the Son of God, the Word of God made flesh. Even though Jesus himself never claimed to be divine, Paul gave him this attribute for one reason - to gain converts among the Gentiles.

The Gentiles were pagans who were used to worshipping gods that had wonderful legends and myths behind them. Several of the pagan deities of the time such as Mithras, Adonis, Attis, and Osiris were all the offspring of a supreme ruling god, and each had died a violent death at a young age, coming back to life a short time later in order to save their people.

Paul took this into account, giving the pagans something similar in Christianity. He attributed divinity to Jesus, saying he was the Son of God, the Supreme, and that he too had died for their sins. In doing so, Paul compromised the teaching

of Jesus with pagan beliefs in order to make Christianity more acceptable to the .Gentiles

The term "son of God" was not something new. However, it had been used in the Old Testament to refer to David (Saul ٢:٧) and his son Solomon (I Chronicles ٢٢:١٠٠) and to refer to Adam (Luke ٣:٣٨) in the New Testament. In his famous Sermon on the Mount, detailed in Matthew ٥, Jesus tells his listeners, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they ".shall be called sons of God

In all cases, the term "son of God" was not meant to be applied literally but to signify love and affection from God to the righteous. "Son of God" means a special closeness to God, not to be of God. After all, people are sons of God, and Allah is the creator of all (life.(١

Christians who lived during the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) believed that he was the divine messenger to them, bringing them the words of God and guiding them. However, after the ascension of Jesus to heaven, Saint Paul, who was deeply influenced by Roman paganism, wanted his preaching of Christianity to be more appealing to the Gentiles, so he compromised the teachings of Jesus (peace be upon him) by adopting certain pagan ideas and interpolating them into Christianity. Thus, the idea of the trinity spread even though it was not part of the original teachings of .(Jesus (peace be upon him

(Divine Justice ('Adl .٢

point

Anyone who believes in Islamic monotheism must believe in the Almighty's

---

.Barbara Brown, A Closer Look at Christianity -١

justice. Because Allah is just, He never wrongs His creatures, for injustice is an evil deed while He is far from doing evil. Because He is omniscient, He does not neglect anything, and because He is self-sufficient, He has no cause to wrong others. Since He owns everything, He does not need the actions of anyone. His wisdom also transcends the universe. Thus, unlike some human beings, He has no cause for :injustice

He is always standing firm on justice. There is no God but Him, the Mighty, the Wise."" ((۳:۱۸

(And your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone." (۱۸:۴۹"

(We(۱) did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves." (۱۶:۱۱۸"

Just as Allah encourages human beings to emulate some of His attributes, such as .being patient and forgiving, He also tells us to follow the way of justice

(Say: 'My Lord has enjoined upon me justice.'" (۷:۲۹"

Although common people may falter in this area, none of the prophets of God or their .successors ever committed any act of injustice

Allah's justice embraces the entire universe. Whoever ponders over the existence of the universe and the order therein will not only observe the spread of Allah's justice over His entire creation but also each of its signs apparent in all aspects of nature -- from the physical world to the biological world, and from the microcosmos to the macrocosmos. The justice of God is particularly visible in the fate and destiny of .human beings, and in their freedom of choice

,Although Allah's justice encompasses everything

We" refers to Allah. Sometimes "We" is used instead of "I" or "Allah" in the Qur'an" -۱ .to refer to Allah the Glorious

people should pray to Allah to treat them not with His justice but rather with His mercy, for if He treated people solely with His justice and punished them immediately .for all of their sins, humanity would have perished a long time ago

?Predestination or Free Will

The question of man's predestination or freedom of choice has preoccupied mankind throughout the ages and continues to be discussed by Islamic philosophers and .scholars. Ultimately, two schools of thought regarding this question have emerged

One, called the Compulsionists, holds that human beings have no freedom of choice whatsoever in life. Every decision people make, every word people say has been predestined since the time of creation. If someone is faithful, it is not he who decides to embrace the faith; if someone is unfaithful, it is not he who rejects the faith. All has .been written

The second school of thought, the Free Will school, declares that human beings are :masters of their own acts. This notion is in concordance with the Qur'an, which states

None will be wronged in anything, nor will you be requited anything except that" (which you used to do," (۳۶:۵۴

:as well as

The truth is from your Lord. So whomever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, let" (him disbelieve." (۱۸:۲۹

From these two verses, it is clear that human beings have the freedom to act but must bear the moral responsibilities for their own actions. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of divine justice itself forces people to accept that their every .action is not predestined

The beginning of guidance

is always from Allah, but the beginning of man's destruction is in his own erroneous .opinions

Whatever good reaches you is from Allah, but whatever evil befalls you is from" (yourself." (۴:۷۹

(Prophethood (Nubuwwa .۳

point

The prophets were the people who received divine revelation. Allah has sent numerous prophets and messengers to humankind since the dawn of history. These prophets were of two types: "local" and "universal." While the local prophets were sent with specific messages to specific groups of people, the universal prophets were sent with messages and books for all of humankind. There were only five universal prophets, and their names were Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (may .(the peace of Allah be upon all of them

A unique characteristic of all the prophets and messengers is that they were infallible - that is, they never committed any sin. The easiest way to see this is to consider that these people were the examples sent for humanity to follow, and so if they committed errors, people would be obliged to follow their errors, thereby making the prophets .and messengers untrustable

Infallibility means protection, and, in Islamic terminology, means the spiritual grace of Allah enabling a person to abstain from sins by his own free will. This power of infallibility and sinlessness does not make a person incapable of committing sins; .rather, he refrains from sins and mistakes by his own power and will

Infallibility is essential since the job of the prophets and messengers is not only to convey the divine scriptures of Allah

but also to lead and guide humanity towards the right path. Therefore, they have to be role models and perfect examples for mankind. This has basis in both the Qur'an and conventional wisdom; the Qur'an mentions infallibility ۱۳ times. Allah says to the :Satan

Certainly you shall have no authority over My servants except those who follow you" (and go astray." (۱۵:۴۲

:The Satan then says to Allah

By Your might, then I will surely mislead them all, except Your chosen servants " (among them [the messengers and imams]."(۳۸:۸۲

Not only did Prophet Muhammad (S) not commit any sins, but he was also never harsh :to human beings or animals. Allah says

And by the mercy of Allah you dealt with them [people] gently, and had you been" (severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from you." (۳:۱۵۸

In most societies, people with bad records would be ineligible to be presidential, governmental, or mayoral candidates since they would be expected to lead society and be good examples of righteousness and honesty. Unfortunately, as a campaign of distorting the image of the prophets of God, many distorted stories exist today, such as the stories in the present-day version of the Old Testament accusing Prophet David (peace be upon him) of adultery with Baathsheba, Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) getting drunk, Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) committing incest, and Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) committing adultery with the Ethiopian women. These are examples of the ethical wrongdoings and moral weaknesses that the enemies of Allah

.tried to ascribe to His pure messengers

The Holy Qur'an(١) speaks of the sins attributed to certain prophets such as Adam (peace be upon him). These verses should not be understood literally in the sense that Adam was committing a sin; allegorical verses are common in the Qur'an. Adam (peace be upon him) did not disobey the obligatory commands of Allah; the command that he did not honor was a recommended command, and, therefore, in the Islamic .law, he cannot be considered to have committed a sin

Although Allah preordained who the prophets were going to be, the prophets nonetheless had to strive for this position. The foremost example of this testing that the prophets had to endure can be seen in the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be .upon him), the father of the prophets

Abraham (peace be upon him) was born into an idolatrous society, but by the purity of his nature he recognized that the idols his people worshipped were capable of nothing, neither harm nor good. So one day, when no one was present, he smashed all of them but the largest, and when the people came to him and asked who had destroyed their gods, he told them to ask the remaining statue if they really believed .that their stone idols had power

Although the people realized at that point that their idols were powerless, they didn't know how to respond, so out of shame and anger they cast Abraham (peace be upon him) into a huge fire. But

---

١- See Qur'an ٢٠:١٢١

Allah protected Abraham (peace be upon him) from the fire and confounded the plots of the polytheists.(1)

After being tortured for and then saved by his faith in Allah, Abraham (peace be upon him) still had to undergo the hardest test of obedience to Allah - the direct order, from Allah, to sacrifice his son Ishmael.(2)

This order came to him in a dream, and although sadness overwhelmed him, he was a strong believer in Allah and did not question it. Ishmael too accepted the command of Allah unquestioningly and allowed his father to lead him to a mountaintop to be sacrificed. His only request was that his father place him face down so that his father would not see his expression as he was being killed.

Abraham (peace be upon him) raised his blade, still ready to comply with the command of Allah. But just then came the revelation that this had only been a test, that God would not order Abraham (peace be upon him) to sacrifice his son, and that Abraham (peace be upon him) could sacrifice a sheep in his stead. This event is commemorated every year on a holiday called the Feast of Sacrifice ('eid al-adhaa) on which animals are killed and the meat distributed to the poor.

After passing these tests, Abraham (peace be upon him) became the leader of humankind as well as the father of the prophets of the three main monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Although Allah sent prophets to every group

۱- This story is mentioned in the Qur'an ۲۱:۵۱-۶۸.

۲- This same story is mentioned in the Old Testament with the only difference being that the Old Testament says that Abraham (peace be upon him) was supposed to sacrifice his son Issac.

of people on the earth, the Qur'an only mentions the names of ٢٥ of them. The first of them was Adam (peace be upon him), the father of humanity, and the last of them and the seal of the prophets was Prophet Muhammad (S).

Why did Allah send Different Prophets and Different Religions?

The way of Allah is one, and because the final messenger, Prophet Muhammad (S), has come, there should be no dispute as to what is the right way to follow. However, throughout history, different messengers with slightly different messages were sent to different peoples because the religious needs of humanity were growing and developing just as the human race was itself growing and developing, and also because different civilizations needed different types of guidance. Nevertheless, the source and basic message behind them was the same - namely, Allah the Exalted and Glorious.

Allah sent Moses (peace be upon him) with the Torah as a light and guidance for the Children of Israel (the Jews) along with many other prophets such as David, Solomon, and so on (peace be upon them). ١,٥٠٠ years after Moses, Allah sent Jesus (peace be upon him), the son of Mary (peace be upon her), confirming the Torah and bringing the Gospel which has also been likened to guidance and light. Finally, ٦٠٠ years after Jesus (peace be upon him), Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (S) with the Qur'an to confirm all the messages before him and to complete the revelation of religion to mankind.

Since all the Judeo-Christian-Islamic prophets were sent sequentially, the question arises

as to why Judaism, Christianity, and Islam now exist as separate religions. The answer is that the followers of these religions, particularly Judaism and Christianity, corrupted the original teachings given to them and ended up making sects of their own rather than following the pure word of God. But as the Qur'an says:

For each of you, We have made a Law and a clear way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation but that He may test you in what He has given you. So strive as a race in good deeds. Your return is to Allah; then He will inform you about that which you used to differ. (۵:۴۸)

The Life of Prophet Muhammad (S)

In ۶th-century CE Arabia, the majority of people were pagans. They lived in tribes, each with its own leader. Some were farmers, others traders, but many reared camels and raided other tribes for booty. It was into this society, in CE ۵۷۰, that Prophet Muhammad (S)(۱) was born in Makkah.

His parents died and he was looked after first by his grandfather and then by his uncle. As he grew up, Prophet Muhammad (S) became known as Prophet Muhammad (S) al-Amin, 'the trustworthy'. He worked for a wealthy older widow, Khadija, who, impressed with his honesty, asked him to marry her. He was twenty-five, and they remained married until her death twenty-five years later.

Prophet Muhammad (S) often used to go from the bustle of Makkah for periods of reflection in a cave outside the city. During one such

---

۱- (S): abbreviation that stands for the Arabic of peace be upon him and his family

time, when he was forty years old, he heard the voice of the angel Jibril giving him a :command

,Recite in the Name of your Lord who creates

.Creates man from a clot

,Recite! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful

,Who taught the use of the pen

(Taught humankind that which they knew not. (۹۶:۱-۵

Prophet Muhammad (S) repeated the words until he had learned them by heart. He rushed home and related his experience to his wife, who comforted and reassured him. Khadija and the Prophet's young cousin 'Ali (peace be upon him) were the first people to understand and accept that Allah had chosen 'the trustworthy one' to .deliver his final guidance

.Prophet Muhammad (S) continued to receive revelations for over twenty years

As time passed, it became clear to ever-increasing numbers of people that Prophet Muhammad (S) was indeed a Messenger of Allah. The least receptive were those powerful Makkans who trafficked in idols and slaves and benefited most from idol worship and the pilgrim trade. They treated Prophet Muhammad (S) with derision. Despite this, he continued to deliver the revelations of Allah's mercy and justice, which .were welcomed by the poor and oppressed

The Prophet (S), his family, and followers were driven from Makkah. For three years they sheltered in a valley outside the city in conditions of hardship and hunger. Narrowly escaping assassination in Makkah, the Prophet (S) traveled to Madina in CE ۶۲۲. The migration from Makkah to Madina, known as the Hijrah, became the starting .point of the Muslim calendar

(Prophet Muhammad (S

was very well received in Madina where he became head of what was to become the first Islamic state. In CE ۶۳۰, Prophet Muhammad (S) and his followers entered Makkah. At the Ka'bah, Prophet Muhammad (S) cleared the hundreds of idols from inside and proclaimed that truth had come and falsehood had vanished. He was ۶۳ when he died, and by the time of his death the majority of people in Arabia had .accepted Islam as their way of life

The final verse of the Qur'an to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S), a few days :before his death, was this

Today I [Allah] have perfected for you your religion, completed my favor upon you," (and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (۵:۳

(Succession to the Prophet Muhammad (S) (Imama .۴

point

All of the prophets and messengers of God had successors, and just as Allah appointed His prophets and messengers for the guidance of mankind, He also appointed successors to the prophets and messengers as a matter of necessity. Abraham (peace be upon him) was succeeded by two of his sons, Isaac and Ishmael (peace be upon them), while Moses (peace be upon him) was succeeded by his brother Aaron (peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon him) by two prophets (whom the Qur'an mentions in the chapter called "Ya Sin".(۱

Likewise, Prophet Muhammad (S) was succeeded by twelve distinguished successors, one after another. These successors were called imams and were appointed by Allah, ,not by humankind. The right to ordain imams belongs only to Almighty Allah

---

.Ref. to ۳۶:۱۳-۱۴ -۱

:and the Qur'an speaks about this in many verses

And remember when your Lord said to the angels, 'Verily I am going to place a" (successor (khalifa)." (۲:۳۰

:Allah addressed Prophet David (peace be upon him) as such

(O David! Verily We have placed you as a successor on earth." (۳۸:۲۶"

And remember when the Lord of Abraham tried him with certain commands which" he fulfilled; Allah said to him, 'Verily I am going to make you a leader (imam) of (mankind.'" (۲:۱۲۴

Allah also attributes the right of appointing leaders to Himself: "We made from among (them leaders, giving guidance under Our command." (۳۲:۲۴

During his lifetime, Prophet Muhammad (S) specifically mentioned the names of the leaders that would come after him, that there would be twelve of them, and that all of (them would be descended from a particular Arab tribe called Quraysh.(۱)

:The twelve successors to Prophet Muhammad (S) are as follows

(Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (۶۰۰–۶۶۱

Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) was the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law and the one about whom he said: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate." He also said, "."Whoever considers me his leader, 'Ali is also his leader

people heard the Prophet (S) say this at a place called Ghadir Khum. Muslims ۱۱۰,۰۰۰ and non-Muslims alike recognized Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) for his wisdom, bravery, and justice. Many of his sayings and speeches have been preserved in a book called The Peak of Eloquence (Nahj al-Balagha). He was assassinated by members of a fringe movement while he

Bukhari, The Book of Ahkam (Laws), vol. ١ p. ١٠١; Muslim, Kitab al-Imaara (The Book -١
.of Leadership), vol. ١ narrations ۴-۶, et al

.was praying

(Fatima az–Zahra (۵۶۲–۵۸۰

Although not one of the successors, Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her) is included in this list because of her high status and importance. Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her) was the daughter of the beloved Prophet of Islam (S) from his respected wife .Khadija

She was born in Makkah on the twentieth day of Jumaada al-Thaani (the sixth month of the Islamic calendar). Although he had several children, Fatima was his favorite, for she was carrying the light of the message of the Prophet (S) to the generations to :come through her offspring. A chapter of the Qur'an(۱) was revealed about her

(Verily We have granted you [Prophet Muhammad] al-kawthar(۲

.Therefore, turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice for Him

.And he who makes you angry - he will be cut off from offspring

She and her father had a mutual attachment; 'Aisha, one of the wives of the Prophet (S), has said: "I never saw a person who so resembled her father in speech, movements, and gestures more than Fatima, and once she goes to visit her father, he (stands, takes her hand, kisses it, and places her in his own seat."(۳

Fatima was so emotionally and spiritually close to her father that he declared: "Fatima (is part of me. Whoever angers her angers me, and she is the mother of her father."(۴

Fatima proved to be the best daughter to her father, mother for her four children (Hasan, Husayn, Zaynab, and Um Kalthoum), and the ideal wife for her husband Imam

---

Al-Kawthar/Chapter ۱۰۸ -۱

Kawthar is one of the names of Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her) as well as the -۲ .name of a river in Paradise

۳- Feiruz Abadi, Fadhaail al-Khamsa, vol. ۳ p. ۱۲۷.

۴- Bukhari, vol. ۲ p. ۱۸۵; Usud al-Ghaaba, vol. ۵ p. ۵۲۰.

Ali (peace be upon him). She was the perfect example of a virtuous, righteous lady in' .Islam

She set many examples in her social and political life. As a result of the conflict over power after the demise of the Holy Prophet (S), Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her) .died at the age of ١٨ years

(Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali (۶۲۵–۶۷۰

(Imam Husayn ibn 'Ali (۶۲۶–۶۸۰

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) revolted against the tyrant of his time, Yazid the son of Mu'awiyah. He left his hometown of Madina to go to the city of Makkah and then with ٧٢ of his followers and close family members to Iraq where he was brutally massacred on the day of Ashura(١) in the city of Karbala, ۶٠ miles to the south of .Baghdad

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) stood for truth, sacrificed himself for truth and justice, and fought corruption and aggression. The battle of Karbala represents the battle between truth and falsehood, good versus evil, and justice versus aggression, .oppression, and tyranny

Therefore, he became the beacon of light for all free people in this universe, shook the foundations of the Muslim nation with his martyrdom, and steered the consciousness of the Muslim people at that time. Hundreds of revolutions and revolts followed his martyrdom until the corrupt empire of Bani Umayyah collapsed. Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) still plays a very significant role in the life of the Muslims .in their endeavor to fight injustice and deviation in all societies

(Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (۶۵۹–۷۱۳

(Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (۶۷۶–۷۳۳

(Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (۷۰۲–۷۶۵

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was the son of Muhammad

.The tenth day of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar -۱

al-Baqir (peace be upon him) and was the sixth imam of the school of the Ahlul Bayt. He was born on the seventeenth day of Rabi' al-Awwal (the third month of the Islamic calendar) in the city of Madina. He learned from his father the sciences of religion and the teachings of Islam and became the authority of jurisprudents, scholars, and .preachers after the martyrdom of his father

He made the mosque of Madina a university from which to spread Islamic ideology and graduated hundreds of scholars versed in Islamic sciences and prophetic traditions. Scholars and preachers gave their testimonies acknowledging his great .standing and abundant knowledge

One of them, Sibt al-Jawzi has said, "Never have I seen scholars less knowledgeable in the presence of a man like al-Sadiq." The men of knowledge and piety saw in Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) a leader, a scholar, and an unmatched educator. He was also a great social personality and an effective political force in the leading .political circles

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) taught two of the leaders of the other Islamic schools of jurisprudence: Abu Hanifa (Nu'man ibn Thabit) and Malik ibn Anas. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) uttered thousands of hadith (Prophetic traditions) regarding every facet of life. He extensively discussed Islamic ethics, mannerisms, integrity, goodness of character, and acts of worship in addition to jurisprudence and .debated with leaders of other schools of thought

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was poisoned by the caliph of his time

.and was buried in the cemetery of al-Baqi' in Madina

(Imam Musa al-Kazim (۷۴۶-۷۹۹

(Imam 'Ali ar-Rida (۷۶۵-۸۱۸

(Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (۸۱۱-۸۳۵

(Imam 'Ali al-Hadi (۸۲۷-۸۶۸

(Imam Hasan al-Askari (۸۴۶-۸۷۴

(Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (۸۶۹-present

Imam al-Mahdi is the last of the imams of the people on earth, and with him the line of succession to the Holy Prophet (S) ends. Because of the necessity of having a representative from Allah present on the earth, he still - by the will of Allah - lives in this world, but he does not live in public view. He will, however, reappear towards the end of human civilization at a time when the world has been filled with evil and .injustice to restore order and make justice prevail

These imams were the authorities of Allah among mankind. Like the Holy Prophet (S), they were all special personalities in matters of knowledge, forbearance, morality, .and justice

(The Family of the Prophet (Ahlul Bayt

The Ahlul Bayt are the immediately family of the Prophet Muhammad (S), namely: his daughter Fatima al-Zahra; his cousin, son-in-law, and first successor Imam 'Ali; and his grandchildren Hasan and Husayn (peace be upon them). The purity of these five is :spoken of in the Qur'an

Allah only wishes to remove all uncleanliness from you, O People of the House (Ahlul" (Bayt), and to make you as pure as possible." (۳۳:۳۳

Like the prophets and the prophets' successors, these five were infallible, free from .all sin or error

Near the end of his life, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "It is probable that I will be called soon, and I will respond. So I leave behind me among you two weighty things: the Book of Allah

p: ٣٥

the Qur'an], and my Ahlul Bayt. Verily, Allah, the Merciful, the Aware, has informed me] that these two will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the (fountain in Heaven called Kawthar."(۱)

The Prophet (S) has also said: "The parable of my Ahlul Bayt is similar to that of Noah's ark. Whoever embarks on it will certainly be rescued, but whoever opposes the (boarding of it will surely be drowned."(۲)

The necessity of taking hold of both things that the Prophet (S) left behind cannot be overemphasized; those who choose to follow the Qur'an but not the guidance of the .Ahlul Bayt will invariably go astray

As a rule, the prophets of Allah did not ask any reward for the pain and suffering they endured while attempting to guide mankind. In fact, this refusal to accept :compensation can be seen as the mark of a prophet

Obey those who ask no reward from you and who have themselves received" (guidance." (۳۶:۲۱

However, by the command of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (S) made one slight exception; although he refused to accept anything for himself, he was commanded to :say

(I do not ask you for any reward except love for my relatives [the Ahlul Bayt]." (۴۲:۲۳"

Love for the Prophet's Ahlul Bayt does not benefit the Prophet himself (S) so much as it does the one who approaches them with kindness and loyalty and in return derives .knowledge, guidance, and blessings from Allah

Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) has spoken about the Ahlul

۱- Sahih Muslim, vol. ۲ p. ۲۳۸; Sahih Tirmithi, vol. II p. ۲۲۰, et. al.

۲- Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Mishkaat al-masaabih, p. ۵۲۳; Faraa'id al-Simtayn, vol. ۲ p. ۲۴۲,

:Bayt

We, the Ahlul Bayt, possess the doors of wisdom and light of governance. Beware that the paths of religion are one and its highways are straight. He who follows them achieves and secures the aim and objective. And he who stands away from them (goes astray and incurs repentance.(١

The example of the descendants of Muhammad - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - is like that of stars in the sky. When one star sets another (one rises.(٢

We are lights of the heavens and the earth and the ships of salvation. We are the repository of knowledge, and towards us is the homecoming of all matters. Through our Mahdi (the final successor to the Prophet) all arguments shall be refuted, and he is the seal of the imams, the deliverer of the ummah (the Muslim nation), and the extremity of the light. Happy are those who hold onto our handle and are brought (together upon our love.(٣

(The Day of Judgement and the Resurrection (Qiyama .۵

point

Approximately ١,٢٠٠ verses of the Qur'an speak of life after death and the Day of Resurrection, as do a vast number of sayings related from Prophet Muhammad and his successors (peace be upon all of them). This number reveals the importance and significance of life after death and emphasizes that the life of the human being does not end at death but in fact continues afterwards towards a new life - indeed, its true .life

Allah placed human beings on the earth to test them, and so

.Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), sermon ١٢٠ -١

.Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), sermon ١٠٠ -٢

.Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkirat al-Khawass, p. ۱۳۸ -۳

different people live for different lengths of time before they die and their souls are separated from their bodies. Their souls then live on, facing the grave and the questioning therein. After that, the souls return to their bodies which will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement, on which day they will receive whatever they .deserve according to their beliefs and deeds in life

Some people will go to Heaven, also called the Garden, or the Paradise. Others will go to Hell, oftentimes called the Fire. And a select few will be brought into a state of .nearness to God

Both Heaven and Hell have different levels; the worst of people will be in the lowest .depths of Hell, while the best of them will be in the highest parts of Heaven

Death and Life after Death

And they ask you concerning the spirit. Say: "The spirit, it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord, and of knowledge, you mankind have been (given only a little. (۱۷:۸۵

Although humanity has been permitted to know only a little about life after death right now, the Holy Qur'an still reveals some of the secrets surrounding the soul. The :Qur'an says

It is Allah who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those souls for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Verily, in this are signs for people who think deeply. ((۳۹:۴۲

The soul will be

buried along with the body in the grave. It could get permission from Allah to depart from the grave, but it must go back to it again. Each individual, if faithful, faces two paradises after death, or if he is unfaithful and a sinner, two hells.(۱) One of them is for .the souls before the Day of Judgement, and the second is the permanent abode

Once Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) sent two messengers to the city of Antioch to call for monotheism and the worshipping of Allah. One of the men of that town embraced the faith and followed them, so the king of the land ordered that righteous :man to be killed. When he died, he said

Verily I have believed in your Lord. So listen to me. It was said to him when the" disbelievers killed him, 'Enter paradise.' He said, Would that my people knew what my (Lord Allah has forgiven me for and made me one of the honored ones.'" (۳۶:۲۵-۲۷

The paradise that he had entered was of the kind, called barzakh, that the soul lives in before the Day of Judgement; on the Day of Judgement everyone will know the fate of everyone else, and there will be no need, as above, to tell others. The descriptions :of both types of hellfire are very vivid and painful

Evil torment encompassed Pharaoh's people - the fire: they are exposed to it" (morning and afternoon, and on the day when the Hour will be established." (۴۰:۴۶

Islam teaches that

Qur'an ۳۶:۲۷ -۱

the parting of the soul is accompanied with severe pain. The moment of death has been described:

Nay! When the soul reaches the collarbone, and it will be said, "Who can cure him and save him from death?" and he, the dying person, will conclude that it is the time of departing, and he is shrouded; the drive on that day will be to your Lord. (۷۵:۲۶-۳۰)

Remember that the two recording angels receive each human being after attaining the age of puberty, one sitting on the right and one on the left, to note his actions. Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher sitting by him to record it. And the stupor of death will come in truth; this is what you have been avoiding. And the trumpet will be blown; that will be the day whereof warning had been given, and every person will come forth with an angel to drive him and an angel to bear witness. It will be said to the sinners:

"Indeed, you were heedless of this. Now We have removed your covering, and sharp is your sight this day." (۵۰:۱۷-۲۲)

But for the true believers, the departure of the soul will be peaceful:

It will be said to the pious: "O you in complete rest and satisfaction, come back to your Lord well-please yourself and well-pleasing unto Him. Enter then among my honored servants, and enter my Paradise." (۸۹:۲۷-۳۰)

Repentance and Forgiveness

Repentance is the giving up of sin and is the best way of expressing regret for

having committed one. It involves both sincerely regretting having committed the particular sin and then resolving never to do it again. Repentance is the source of and :means to success

(Turn to Allah, O Believers, that you may be successful." (۲۴:۳۱"

No matter how grievous a person's sin may be, the forgiveness of Allah is greater, and no one should be ashamed to turn towards Allah in repentance because Allah can .erase the sins of whomever He pleases

Say: "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, despair not of the mercy of Allah; verily, Allah forgives all sins. Verily, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. ((۳۹:۵۳

(Tell My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful. (۱۵:۴۹

Will they not turn to Allah and ask His forgiveness? Allah is the Forgiving, the Merciful. ((۵:۷۴

(Your Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind in spite of their wrongdoing. (۱۳:۶

Despite His ability to destroy mankind if he so willed, the main characteristics of Allah are forgiveness and mercifulness, and for this reason Muslims begin nearly every action, speech, or endeavor with the words, "In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, (the most Compassionate."(۱

Repentance is of benefit both now and during the Hereafter. Prophet Muhammad (S) has narrated that repenting brings an increase of wealth, protection from danger, and an easing of hardships and difficulties. Furthermore, it has been said that the fastest way to attain nearness to Allah is to humble the self before Allah and admit to wrongdoing. The benefits of repentance

---

.bisimillah al-rahman al-rahim -۱

.for the next life are obvious - entrance into Paradise and safety from the Hellfire

Repentance will be accepted up until the moment of death. Prophet Muhammad (S) once said that if a person seeks repentance one year before dying, Allah will accept it. Even if a person seeks repentance one day before dying, Allah will accept it. Then he pointed to his throat and said that even if someone seeks repentance before his soul .reaches here, Allah will accept it

Nonetheless, repentance should be done as soon as possible and should not be delayed; this point has been emphasized again and again in the Islamic tradition. Imam 'Ali says: "How numerous are the procrastinators who postpone [repenting and (doing good deeds] until death overtakes them!"(۱

Repentance should be done in secrecy and privacy. People can establish a direct link to Allah while seeking repentance without the necessity of a third person interfering and in fact should not let others know about their sins. Prophet Muhammad (S) once told Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him): "O 'Ali, blessed is he whom Allah looks upon while (he is weeping for the sin that none is aware of except Allah."(۲

In addition to not revealing his own sins, every person must conceal the faults of his brother or sister in religion to preserve that person's honor and society. That person's faults may be dealt with personally and privately but must not be spread among .society

A person who sincerely repents is loved by Allah and

.Ghurar al-Hikm, p. ۲۴۰ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷ p. ۶۳ -۲

is as if he or she had never committed any sins at all. Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said: "He who repents of his sins is as one who has not any burden of sin."(1)

But repentance must be sincere; Allah knows who sincerely regrets misdeeds and who is just saying words. A person came to Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) and said, "Astaghfirullah, I seek Allah's forgiveness," and the Imam (peace be upon him) replied:

Do you know what asking Allah's forgiveness is? It is a word that stands on six supports. The first is to repent over the past. The second is to make a firm determination never to revert to it. The third is to discharge all the rights of people so that you may meet Allah quite clean with nothing to account for.

The fourth is to fulfill every obligation which you ignored in the past so that you may now be just with it. The fifth is to aim at the flesh grown as a result of unlawful earning so that you may melt it by grief of repentance till the skin touches the bone and a new flesh grows between them. And the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you previously made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. On such an occasion, you may say, "I seek Allah's forgiveness."(2)

Part ۲: Islamic Practices

point

Islam is like a tree whose roots are its beliefs and whose branches are its practices. If

---

۱- Wasaa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. ۱۶ p. ۷۴.

۲- Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), saying ۴۲۶

the roots are not firm and healthy, the tree will not survive – but the roots only form .the foundation of the tree

The Islamic Practices are referred to as such because they are the ways in which the theory of Islam – the Beliefs – are turned into reality. The different forms of outward worship translate a person's inner love and connection with the Almighty into a .physical form

Islam has ten fundamental Practices: prayers, fasting, two types of necessary almsgiving, pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah, jihad, enjoining good, forbidding evil, supporting those who walk in the path of God, and turning away from the .enemies of God

(Prayers (Salaat .۱

point

Prayers are the pillar of religion. Through prayer, people establish communication and dialogue with the Almighty, and they realize that they are not alone in this universe and that they have been created for a legitimate purpose. Allah created human .beings to recognize and appreciate His grace and blessings

Just as the body needs food to survive and grow, so does the soul, and the food of the soul is prayer. So that people receive their necessary spiritual nourishment and maintain a strong connection to Allah, Islam orders them to pray at five particular :times of the day

Establish regular prayers from mid-day till the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn; verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is an act (witnessed. (۱۷:۷۸-۷۹

The necessity of connection with the Absolute

People offer their prayers to Allah for many reasons, the first being the

greatness of the Creator. In society, whenever people meet others whom they perceive to be of a high rank – such as celebrities, politicians, doctors, scholars, and so on – they show considerable respect to them at the expense of their own dignity. If people show so much respect to other human beings who were also created, like themselves, from dust, how much respect should they show before their Creator whose knowledge, superiority, and grandeur is limitless and eternal? Shouldn't they, ?at least, stand before Him many times a day and bow in respect and gratitude

:Allah refers to those "endowed with understanding" as such

Those who remember Allah always – standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides – and contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, "O Lord! You have not created all this without purpose. Glory be to You! Grant us salvation from the (torment of the Fire." (۳:۱۹۱

Human beings feel frail in front of the Absolute Power in this universe. If they try to act on their own without the help of their Lord, they will certainly fail because the source of all power and might is Allah. Those who accomplished great feats for humanity – scientists in the laboratory, soldiers in the battlefield, astronauts in space, doctors in the hospital – all sought help from their Lord before embarking on their :adventures. Alone, human beings are poor and in need of Allah

O mankind! You are the ones who are in need of Allah, but"

Allah is free from all needs, worthy of praise. If He wanted, he could destroy you and (bring about a new creation, and that is not hard for Allah." (۳۵:۱۵-۱۷

The need for prayer is great, and a deep and strong feeling inside people drives them .towards the Absolute Power to seek His help and assistance

The instinct to worship has been born with human beings as part of their natural disposition (fitra). Since the dawn of humanity, people have worshipped God in many different ways; prehistoric implements used for this purpose have been found. The need to worship is as strong as the need to eat, and just as the person who lacks proper food will eat anything to put an end to hunger, the person who does not find the proper spiritual nutrition will be led to unlawful worshipping such as the worship of animals, fire, stars, science, art, materialism, or anything else that has no power to help or harm anyone. Whether people have a proper religion or not, everyone .worships something, but they should only worship Allah and nothing else

The regular Islamic prayers have innumerable practical benefits, such as :discouraging those who perform them from committing bad acts

(Truly, prayer restrains from evil and shameful deeds." (۲۹:۴۵"

But one must remember that the Qur'an differentiates between merely saying the prayers and "establishing" them. While reciting prayers is simply a physical act, establishing prayer encompasses complete mental and spiritual concentration and the commitment not to leave them aside. Those who do

establish the prayers and show their devotion through them have mastered one of :the foremost qualities which the believers show

Successful are the believers - those who offer their prayers with humility and" submissiveness... and those who guard their five compulsory prayers. These are indeed the inheritors who shall inherit Paradise and abide forever therein." (٢٣:١; ٢٣:٩-١١)

Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) has said: "If a prayerful person knew to what extent he was surrounded by His mercy, he would never raise his head from prostration." (١)

When a Society Ceases Prayer

:Leaving behind the prayers is dangerous and leads to disaster

There has succeeded them a posterity who have given up the prayers and followed" their lusts, so they will be living lost, in confusion and disarray...." (١٩:٥٩)

Details of the Five Prescribed Prayers

Preconditions

Times

The dawn prayer (al-fajr): This prayer should be done between the time the first ray of light appears in the sky and the time of sunrise.

The noon prayer (azh-zhuhr): The specific time for this prayer is right after the sun passes over from its noon position. However, it can be done up until sunset.

The afternoon prayer (al-'asr): This prayer can be done any time after the noon prayer and before sunset.

The sunset prayer (al-maghrib): This prayer should be done after the sun sets at the time when the red sky on the eastern horizon disappears but can be said up until midnight.

The night prayer (al-'ishaa): This prayer can be done any time after the sunset prayer .and before midnight

(Direction (al-qiblah

During prayer, all Muslims must face the Ka'bah, the House of Allah

---

.Ghurar al-Hikm, p. ۱۷۵ -۱

built by Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael (peace be upon them). The Ka'bah is located in the city of Makkah in the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East. One way to determine the precise direction of prayer (called al-qiblah) is to use a compass. In America, Muslims face north-east to find the shortest path to Makkah.

Place

The place where a person is going to say prayers should either belong to that person, or else that person must have permission to pray there (unless the place is public, in which no permission is required). The spot where the forehead touches the ground should be clean (taahir), and prostration must be done on earth or inedible plants (including paper and wood). If a man and woman are praying together, the woman must stand behind the man so that he cannot see her.

Purity of the Body

Just as the soul must be pure, concentrated, and calm before prayers, the body must also be free from impurities. Certain items are considered ritually impure and must be avoided, removed, or purified before the prayers. A specified washing (wudhu) must also be done before the prayers:

O you who believe, when you intend to offer prayers, wash your faces and your hands from the elbows to the fingertips. Rub [with wet hands] your heads and your feet up to the ankles, and if you are in a state of sexual impurity (janaba), purify yourself [by bathing your entire body]. (۵:۶)

If water is unavailable, dust may be used out of necessity:

But if

you are ill or on a journey and you come from the call of nature or have been in contact with women and do not find water, then take clean sand and rub your faces and your hands. Allah does not want to place you in any difficulty, but He wants to purify you and to complete His favor on you that you may be thankful. (۵:۶)

Clothing

During prayer, a man must wear at least enough clothing to cover his private parts, and a woman must cover her entire body (including the head and hair) except the face and hands. Clothing worn during prayer must be clean and lawfully obtained and may not have been stolen or borrowed without permission.

The Call to Prayer (Adhaan)

Although not required, the call for prayer is highly recommended and is one of the distinguishing emblems of the Islamic faith. The call to prayer consists of two parts: the adhaan and the iqaama.

The person reciting the adhaan should stand facing the direction of prayer and say:

Allahu akbar - God is the Greatest (۴ times)

Ashhadu an laa ilaaha illa Allah

I testify that there is no God but Allah (۲ times)

Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah

I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (۲ times)

Hayya 'alaa as-salaah

Hasten to prayer (۲ times)

Hayya 'alaa al-falaah

(Hasten to success (٢ times

Hayya 'alaa khayr al-'amal

(Hasten to the best of deeds (٢ times

Allahu akbar

(God is the Greatest (٢ times

Laa ilaaha illa Allah

(There is no God but Allah (٢ times

The iqama should be said immediately before the prayer and is

identical to the adhaan with three exceptions: (a) the initial phrase, "Allahu akbar," is only said twice; (b) the final phrase, "La ilaaha illa Allah," is only said once, and (c) the phrase "Qad qaamat as-salaah" ("Prayer is being offered") should be inserted after "Hayya 'alaa khayr al-'amal."

The Prayers

Each of the prayers consists of a specific number of units (rak'aat). The dawn prayer has two units, the noon and afternoon prayers have four units, the sunset prayer has three units, and the night prayer has four units. The simplest prayer to learn is the two-unit dawn prayer which will be described here.

Once all of the preconditions above have been fulfilled, and the person intending to offer prayer is facing the proper direction (al-qiblah), the prayer may be begun. First, a sincere intention should be made to say the particular prayer (in this case, the dawn prayer). Then the hands should be placed behind the ears and the following said:

Allahu akbar God is the Greatest (1)

The first chapter of the Qur'an (al-fatiha) must be recited:

Bismillah ar-rahmaan ar-rahim

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate

Al-hamdu lillaahi rabb al-'aalamin

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds

Ar-rahmaan ar-rahim

The Merciful, the Compassionate

Maaliki yawm-id-din

Master of the Day of Judgement

Iyyaaka na'budu wa iyyaaka nasta'in

You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help

Ihdina-s-siraat al-mustaqim

Guide us the straight path

Siraat alladhina an'amta 'alayhim

The path of those whom You have blessed,

ghayr al-maghdubi 'alayhim

not of those on whom is Your wrath,

wa laa adh-dhaalin

nor of those

p: ۵۰

---

۱ - Saying the prayers in Arabic is highly recommended. However, if a person is absolutely unable to say the prayers in Arabic, the prayers may be said in another language which the person understands, such as English.

.who have gone astray

Next, another full chapter of the Qur'an must be recited. The example given here is (the chapter entitled "The Oneness of God"(١

Bismillah al-rahmaan al-rahim

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate

Qul huwa allahu ahad

Say, He is Allah, the One

Allahu-s-samad

Allah, the Eternal

Lam yalid wa lam yulad

He begets not, nor was He begotten

Wa lam yakun lahu kufwaan ahad

.And there is nothing comparable to Him

At this point, "Allahu akbar" should be said and the person should bow, placing the hands on the knees and keeping the back straight. While bowing, the following should :be recited

Subhaana rabbi al-'azim wa bihamdih

Glory be to my Lord, the Great, and praise be to Him

:Then, resuming the standing position, the following should be said

Sami'a Allahu liman hamidah

God hears the one who praises Him

Then "Allahu akbar" is said, and the person does prostration (sujud) on the ground. In sujud, the forehead, palms of the hands, knees, and tips of the topes must all touch :the ground, and the following must be said one or three times

Subhaana rabbi al-a'laa wa bihamdih

Glory be to my Exalted Lord, and praise be to Him

:Allahu akbar" should be said, and the person should sit up on the knees and say"

Astaghfirullaaha rabbi wa atubu ilayh

I seek forgiveness of God, my Lord, and turn towards Him

Again, "Allahu akbar" should be said, and sujud repeated. Then the person should stand up and repeat the same process,i.e. recite the first chapter of the Qur'an, recite another chapter of the Qur'an, bow, and

---

.Al-tawhid/Chapter ۱۱۲ -۱

:do the two sujuds. Finally, sitting on the knees, the following must be said

Ashhadu an laa ilaaha illa Allah

I testify that there is no God but Allah

wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh

.and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger

.Allahumma salli 'alaa Muhammadin wa aal-i- Muhammad

.O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad

.Assalaamu 'alayka ayyuha an-nabiy wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu

.Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings

.Assalaamu 'alayna wa 'alaa 'ibaad allahi-s-saalihin

.Peace be upon us, and upon all the righteous Servants of God

Assalaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu

.Peace be upon you, and the mercy of God, and His blessings

It is recommended that "Allahu akbar" be said three times, raising the hands each time to the side of the face. This action concludes the two-unit prayer although it may .be followed by supplications or other recitations

(Fasting (sawm .۲

Almost every religion on earth encourages some form of fasting. Prophet Muhammad (S) and the prophets before him (peace be upon them) all called upon their followers :to fast

O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you just as it was prescribed for" (those before you so that you may be pious and learn self-restraint." (۲:۱۸۳

Islam prescribes complete fasting - complete abstinence from food, drink (including water), smoking, and sexual activity from dawn until the time of the sunset prayer .((about twenty minutes after the sun actually sets

Although fasting is recommended on many days, it is required during every day of the month of Ramadan, the ninth month

p: ۵۲

of the Islamic lunar calendar. One reason why the month of Ramadan was decreed by Allah for this honor is because the Qur'an was first revealed during the month of Ramadan on a night called "The Night of Destiny" (laylat al-qadr). Muslims believe that on this night, every year, Allah determines the fate of all people for the year to :come, and a chapter of the Qur'an was revealed about this night

Verily, We have sent it [the Qur'an] down on the Night of Destiny

?And what would make you know what the Night of Destiny is

;The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months

;He sends down the angels, and the Spirit during it by His will for every matter

(Peace! Till the rising of the dawn. (Chapter ۹۷

So that people would worship Allah copiously for many nights, the exact night of the Night of Power has been kept a secret, but it most likely falls on the ۱۹th, the ۲۱st, or .the ۲۳rd of the month of Ramadan

As with prayer, the benefits of fasting are innumerable and can only be appreciated by those who practice it. Fasting strengthens the willpower, teaches discipline, encourages sympathy with the poor, breaks bad habits, improves the health, and establishes a sense of religious brotherhood and sisterhood. But the strongest benefits are spiritual; Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S), has said: "Fasting is to deepen and strengthen faith." Fasting sharpens the spiritual awareness and imbues a sense of gratitude towards

.Allah

Aside from giving up their own food and drink, those who fast are also encouraged .while fasting to give charity towards the poor and needy in society

(Almsgiving (Zakaat and Khums .۳-۴

point

Every material possession that people acquire comes through the generosity of Allah. Although people must work to earn a living, Allah is the one who determines what sustenance they will receive. To some, such as Mary, the mother of Jesus (peace be :upon them), He gives unconditionally

Every time Zachariah entered the sanctuary to visit her, he found her supplied with" sustenance. He said, 'O Mary! From where did you get this?' She said, 'This is from (Allah; verily, Allah provides sustenance to whomever He wills without limit." (۳:۳۷

Not only human beings but also all the plants, animals, and other creatures in this universe are sustained by Allah: "Many are the creatures that carry not their own (provision; Allah provides for them and for you." (۲۹:۶۰

Since everything people possess is from Allah, when they are told to return some of their wealth in charity, they are not actually giving up their own property but merely what Allah has lent them for use in this world. Allah says: "O you who believe! Spend (out of what We have provided for you." (۲:۲۵۴

Giving charity benefits the individual as well as society since almsgiving purifies the :soul from stinginess and meanness

(Take alms from their wealth in order to purify and sanctify them." (۹:۱۰۳"

For society, the money from the obligatory charities (zakaat and khums) provides security and dignity by

providing for the needy, bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, and eliminating poverty. The money collected is used for food, shelter, education, health care, orphanages, libraries, pavement, and other public services. From a moral standpoint, the obligation to pay the obligatory charities is no less important than the obligation to pray; whenever the Qur'an refers to those who establish prayers, it .immediately refers also to those who pay the obligatory charities

:Charity is not a gift for the poor but rather is a right

(And in their properties is the right of the beggar and the destitute." (۵۱:۱۹"

A community in which everyone pays the zakaat and thekhums will be successful, but a community in which people do not pay them will fall apart. Prophet Muhammad (S) :has said

My community will continue to live fairly they are faithful to each other, return" deposits to their owners, and give alms (zakaat) to the poor. But if they do not fulfill (these duties, they will encounter famine and scarcity."(۱

:Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) has also said

Allah the Glorified has fixed the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich." Consequently, whenever the destitute remains hungry, it is because some rich (persons have denied him his share."(۲

These sayings and legislations only refer to the obligatorycharities; in addition to them, people are encouraged to give voluntary charity of every kind - in money, word, or deed. Voluntary charity is called sadaqa and, like the zakaat andkhums, benefits both the

---

Wasaa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. ۶ p. ۱۳ -۱

.(Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence -۲

.individual and society

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: "Give charity and cure your sick persons by it because charity can surely remove your bad fortunes and ailments, and it causes prolongation of your lifetimes and increases your rewards."(1)

:He also has said

When charity is delivered out of the hand of its owner, it says five things: at first, I was perishing and you gave me life I was insignificant and you made me great. I was an enemy and you turned me into a friend. You used to protect me then, but now I will protect you up till the Day of Resurrection.(2)

Allah says in the Qur'an: "Surely those who recite the Book of Allah and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them secretly and openly hope for a gain which will not perish." (35:29)

Specifics of the zakaat and khums

Zakaat. The zakaat is a type of almsgiving which must be paid yearly on the following items if they are possessed in sufficient quantities: wheat, barley, dates, raisins, gold, .silver, camels, cows, and sheep

Khums. Khums should be paid yearly on 20% of the excess profit that a person acquires. "Excess profit" refers to the profit that remains after a person pays for food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities for himself and his family. It must be given to one authorized to collect it (usually, a religious scholar) so that it can be distributed in the appropriate way. Khums must also be paid on six other items, such as gems obtained

---

1- Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 6 p. 31

2- Al-Ithna'ashariyyah, p. 23.

.while diving, but these cases in modern society tend to be rare

:The khums has been ordained in the Qur'an

And know that whatever profit you may attain, one fifth of it is assigned to Allah and" the Messenger, and to the near relatives [of the Messenger] and the orphans, the destitute, and the wayfarer, if you have believed in Allah and that which We sent (down to our servant [Muhammad]." (۸:۴۱

(Pilgrimage to the City of Makkah (Hajj .۵

point

Everyone who can must, at least once, make the pilgrimage (hajj) to the holy city of Makkah. This pilgrimage occurs every year during Dhul Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Those who make the pilgrimage follow in the footsteps of .Abraham (peace be upon him), the father of the prophets

years ago, Abraham (peace be upon him) along with his wife Hagar and his son ۴,۰۰۰ Ishmael set out on a vast journey wandering through Babylon, Syria and Arabia crossing vast hills, rivers, and deserts until arriving in the holy land of Makkah where :Abraham (peace be upon him) received revelation from Allah

Do not associate with Me anything, and purify My house for those who circle around" it and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves. And proclaim among the people the pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel from every remote path that they may witness the benefits for them and mention the (name of Allah during the appointed days over what He has given them." (۲۲:۲۶-۲۸

First, Abraham and Ishmael (peace

be upon them) had to raise the cubic structure, the Ka'bah, on the foundations of the

– (first house made for mankind" (۳:۹۵"

.(built originally at the dawn of creation by Adam (peace be upon him

Then Abraham (peace be upon him) had to proclaim the pilgrimage to mankind. Unconcerned as to who would hear his voice in this desert land, he climbed atop a nearby mountain and proclaimed to humanity the divine message of the hajj. This call has passed through the distances of space and time and still reverberates to the millions of people around the globe who answer his call and come to make the .pilgrimage

Significance of the Hajj

The hajj is the supreme symbol of universal brotherhood and is the greatest annual congregation in the world. Every year, in Makkah, millions of people from diverse origins stand shoulder-to-shoulder. Clad in the barest of materials - two pieces of white cloth - and performing the same rituals, no person can be distinguished from another on the basis of wealth, lineage, power, or education. The most powerful leaders are on the same level as the masses of the world. All artificial or human-imposed distinctions between human beings are lifted, and people have the chance to .know each other solely as brothers and sisters in humanity for the span of a few days

This sense of equality should translate back into everyday life; the person who has gone on the hajj should return home freed from erroneous notions of racism, classism, and so forth. For

the Islamic people as a whole, the hajj serves as an enormous convention or conference in which news is passed on and problems are solved. Since the beginning of Islam, the hajj has been one of the major cultural unifying factors of the Muslim .peoples since, every year, delegates from every civilization meet in one place

The hajj also develops the human soul. Every human being, whether aware of it or not, is travelling towards Allah, and part of the essential spiritual development in life is to recognize and accept this journey. The hajj not only represents this journey physically but also forces the pilgrims to express their willingness to leave behind .everything for Allah

Allah has made known that among the ways to approach Him for forgiveness is to journey to His house, the Ka'bah in Makkah. Once Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) was with a group of his followers in the vicinity of the Ka'bah when they saw a man holding in his hand the cloth cover of the Ka'bah and supplicating: "O Keeper of the House! This house is Your house, and this guest is Your guest. Each guest sees goodness from its host. Tonight, let Your goodness be the forgiving of my sins." Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) asked his followers: "Did you hear the words of this man?" The said, "Yes, we did." Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) replied: "Almighty God is more forgiving ".than to drive away His guests

The Rites of Hajj

The beginning of the pilgrimage

is marked by proclaiming, "Labbayk, Allahumma, Labbayk" - "I am here, O Lord, I am here!" followed by, "You Who have no partner - I am here! Surely all praise and "!blessings are Yours, and the Kingdom - I am here, O Lord, I am here

During the hajj, all of the millions of people present engage in circling the Ka'bah (a practice called tawwaf). This constant circling around Allah's House symbolizes humanity's dependence on Allah and teaches the ones doing tawwaf to seek help only .from Allah. It also illustrates how every person's ultimate being revolves around Allah

After tawwaf, the pilgrims run between two small mountains called Safa and Marwa, re-enacting Hagar's search for water for her infant son Ishmael. Alone in the desert, she and her baby had been in desperate need of water, and she had been running back and forth looking for some hint of moisture in the sand. Seeing her effort, Allah produced for her the spring of Zamzam, a spring of cool, pure water which gushed .forth at Ishmael's tiny feet and has continued to flow until this very day

By imitating her search, the pilgrims not only remember her story but also assimilate into themselves the message that they cannot sit and wait for Allah's blessings to unfold magically upon them. Rather, if they are in need of something, they should .work hard and then hope for the munificence of God in response

The most significant day of the pilgrimage is the Day of Arafat. Arafat

is a desert outside the city of Makkah in which all the pilgrims must stand from noon to sunset and communicate with Allah. The time in Arafat marks the real essence of the ".hajj; Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: "The hajj is Arafat

In Arafat, the pilgrims leave behind all material possessions except for the two pieces of cloth they are wearing and are returned to the same condition in which they were born. The vast gathering - imagine, millions of people all dressed alike all standing in the same place all at the same time - represents the true origin and fate of humanity: born from dust, living for a short while, and then being resurrected from dust again. The scene of Arafat resembles what the Day of Resurrection will be like as countless individuals are pieced together from dust again to withstand judgement by the .Almighty

At a place called Mina, the pilgrims throw pebbles at Satan. This act is extremely difficult and dangerous and represents probably the only case in human society where people would voluntarily enter a mob of people throwing stones in all directions. By stoning pillars, which are physical representations of Satan, the pilgrims reinforce inside themselves how they should treat Satan, who has sworn to be the enemy of mankind. This act is also another historical re-enactment; on his way to fulfill the command of Allah in slaying his son, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) ,met Satan in each of these three places and

.instead of listening to his dissuasions, threw stones at him

At the end of the hajj, each pilgrim must sacrifice an animal just as Abraham (peace be upon him) did in lieu of his son. The sacrifice indicates the pilgrims' willingness to sacrifice anything in life for Allah. The meat of the animal should not be wasted, though; one-third may be kept for personal use while one-third should be given to .friends and the final third to the poor

Jihad .۶

The literal meaning of jihad is "to strive hard" to progress in all aspects of life. Although this word, in English, has taken on purely military connotations, in reality it covers the vast range of human enterprise - family life, work, spiritual development, .and, at the end of all this, justified defensive warfare

The most important jihad is the struggle to purify the soul, and this jihad far outweighs any military jihad. Once, Prophet Muhammad (S) met a group of soldiers returning from a defensive battle and addressed them: "Welcome to the people who have concluded the minor jihad(struggle)." Astonished, the soldiers asked, "Was this the minor jihad? Then what is the major jihad?" Prophet Muhammad (S) replied: "The ".major jihad is the jihad to purify one's self

The beginning of the jihad to purify the soul is to restrain the self from committing sins and thereby corrupting the soul. The next step is to control material desires and ambitions and free the self from the things that distract it from Allah. All of the

forms of worship in Islam - prayers, fasting, charity, and so on - exist to purify and perfect the soul. Only in the upward development of the soul do human beings find happiness in this life and the next, for if the soul is unhappy, a person will be miserable .regardless of how materially wealthy he or she may be

And by the soul and Him Who perfected it, then showed it what is right and what is" wrong for it - indeed, he succeeds who purifies his soul, and, indeed, he fails who (corrupts his soul." (۹۱:۷

The soul is the essence of man; it is the part which will outlast this life and be judged in the next, and one of the main reasons human beings were placed in this world is to .test and develop their souls

Jihad does also refer to the legitimate struggle to defend human rights, such as personal and religious freedom as well as the defense of land, property, and families. :Those who are being attacked have the right to defend themselves in jihad

Permission [to fight] is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully and offensively waged, and surely Allah is able to give them victory. Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only because they said, "Our Lord is Allah...." ((۲۲:۳۹-۴۰

:The believers are in fact commanded to defend human rights and integrity

And why do you not fight in the way of Allah and the utterly oppressed men, women, and children who

are crying out, "O Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will (help." (۴:۷۵

Jihad as fighting must be for just causes and to defend the freedom, liberty, and integrity of societies - and when these issues are at stake, fighting is not only (permitted, but required. "Fight against aggressors until oppression is stopped." (۲:۱۹۳

None of the powerful countries today could have achieved their stature without a war for independence and a struggle for freedom, nor would they have retained their positions without strong military development. In life, struggle will always exist between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and societies cannot progress if tyrants .are left alone to do what they want to do

(Enjoining good (amr bil-ma'rouf) and forbidding evil (nahiy an al-munkar .۷-۸

Let there arise from you a group of people inviting to what is good, enjoining what is" (right, and forbidding what is wrong; these are the ones who will be successful." (۳:۱۰۴

In order for religion to progress and society to flourish, people must take the initiative and attempt to guide each other towards the right and away from the wrong. This kind of advising is mandatory on those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement. Giving sincere advice is not, as some may argue, meddling in someone else's .business, but is in fact a valuable favor and one of the best forms of charity

(Supporting those who walk in the path of Allah (tawalli li awliyaa' Allah .۹

This entire phrase means to be a friend and a helper

of the righteous, pious people who are on the side of Allah and religion. Specifically, it includes the prophets and imams(successors to the prophets) as well as those who :work to establish order, justice, and religion on earth

And whoever takes Allah, His messenger, and those who have belief as protectors" (and guardians, then the party of Allah will be victorious." (۵:۵۶

(Turning away from the enemies of Allah (tabarri min a'daa Allah .۱۰

This phrase refers to the opposite of tawalli li awliyaa' Allah. Those who sincerely believe in Allah must dissociate themselves from those people who obstruct truth and :justice and prevent the light of Allah from reaching others

Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against" you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity. It is regarding those who fought against you on account of religion and have driven you out of your homes and helped to drive you out that Allah forbids you to befriend them, and whoever will befriend them, then such are the (wrongdoers." (۶۰:۸-۹

O ye who believe, take not for protectors and helpers those who take your religion as" a mockery and fun from among those who received the scriptures before you, nor (from among the disbelievers, and fear Allah if you indeed are true believers." (۵:۵۷

Let not the believers take the disbelievers as supporters and helpers and friends" instead of the believers. And whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any ".way

(۳:۲۸)

It is for the good of the believers that Allah warns them against being friends and associates of the unbelievers and the tyrants and the enemies of Allah and humankind.

Part ۳: Religious Texts

The Qur'an

point

The Qur'an is the last in a series of divine books revealed by Allah to mankind through the prophets. The Holy Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) over a period of ۲۳ years and consists of ۱۱۴ chapters arranged from longest to shortest. Its length compares to that of the New Testament. The revelations were written down by a group of people appointed by the Prophet (S) and, after his death, first compiled by Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him).

The Qur'an sheds light on many different aspects of life - legal, moral, social, political, economic, philosophical, mystical, and scientific - and also contains stories of previous prophets.

"We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything - a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves to Allah as Muslims." (۱۶:۸۹)

Less rigid than poetry but more beautiful than prose, its peculiar music transcends all other forms of writing. It speaks only the truth, and its directives are universal for all places and times. In reality, it is the completion of the earlier revelations, such as the Old and New Testaments, and is the only divine revelation to exist in its original unchanged form:

"Verily, it is We Who have sent down the Qur'an, and surely We will guard it from corruption." (۱۵:۹)

From

p: ۶۶

the time of the Prophet (S) until today, not one word of the Qur'an has been edited, .altered, added, omitted, lost, distorted, or otherwise changed

The Qur'an plays an important role in Muslim life. It constantly reminds Muslims of their duties, rights, obligations, and destiny. Muslims are asked to study, memorize, ponder, and reflect on the Qur'an and then to implement its teachings. The chapters of the Qur'an contain the supreme divine wisdom which is meant for all seekers of truth - ordinary people, scholars, specialists, old, young, Muslims, and non-Muslims. It addresses all mankind; specific verses even clarify this fact by beginning with the words, "O mankind!" The Qur'an satisfies people with its symphony of words, its science, its narrations and intellectual discourse, and fascinates them with its richness .and depth

Science and the Qur'an

Many scientific facts and realities are present in the Qur'an, which is the only religious book not to contradict science. Creation is described on the embryological and :cosmological levels

And indeed We created man out of an extract of clay. Thereafter, We made him as" mixed drops of the male and female fluids and lodged him in a safe lodging (womb of the mother). Then We made the mixed drops into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh. Then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. And then We brought ,it forth as another creation. So blessed be Allah

(the best of creators." (۲۳:۱۲-۱۴

A careful comparison of this verse with the actual details of embryological development will reveal no contradictions. The creation of life, the earth, and the :universe is also described in a way that parallels modern scientific theory

Do not those who disbelieve know that the heavens and the earth were joined" together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they then not believe? And We have placed on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with them, and We placed therein broad highways for them to pass through that they may be guided, and We have made the heaven a roof, safe, and well-guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs. And He it is Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating" ((۲۱:۳۰-۳۳

Human beings are asked to ponder the creation of the universe and consider their :role therein

Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day there are indeed signs for men of understanding - those who remember Allah always, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, "O Lord! You have not created all this without purpose! Glory be to You! Give us salvation from the torment of the fire." ((۳:۱۹۰

?Are you more difficult to create or the heavens above

(۷۹:۲۷)

Many of the chapters are named after cosmological objects such as "The Star"(۱) and :"The Sun",(۲) the latter of which begins

By the sun and its brightness, and by the moon as it follows it, and by the day as it shows up in the sun's brightness, and by the night as it conceals it, and by the heavens ....and Him who built it, and by the earth and Him who spread it

Although the people of the Prophet's time knew nothing about the lifetimes or mechanisms of the sun and stars, the Qur'an refers to the fact that stars exist for a :fixed period of time

And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term appointed. That is the decree of the Almighty, the Omniscient. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions to traverse till it returns like the old dried curved date-stalk. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all swim each in an orbit. ((۳۶:۳۸

Even the expansion of the universe is alluded to: "With power did We construct the (heavens; verily, We are able to expand the vastness of space thereof." (۵۱:۴۷

:The end of this universe, too, is described

And remember the day when We will roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. It is a promise binding upon (Us. Truly, We shall do it. (۲۱:۱۰۴

When the sun has wound around and

.An-Najm/Chapter ۵۳ -۱

.Ash-Shams/Chapter ۹۱ -۲

lost its light and has been overthrown, and when the stars shall fall, and when the mountains shall be made to pass away... And when the seas shall become a blazing (far or shall overflow.... (۸۱:۱-۳,۶

When the Heaven is cleft asunder, and when the stars have fallen and scattered, and (when the seas have burst forth.... (۸۲:۱-۳

When the Event befalls - and there can be no denying its befalling - it will bring low some, and others it will exalt. When the earth will be shaken with a terrible shaking, and the mountains will be powdered to dust so that they will become floating dust (particles.... (۵۶:۱-۶

And they ask you concerning the mountains. Say, "My Lord will blast them and scatter them as particles of dust; then He shall leave it as a smooth, level plain. You will see (therein nothing crooked or curved." (۲۰:۱۰۵-۱۰۷

The Qur'an does not contradict science because Allah Who revealed the Qur'an is the .same Allah Who made this creation

The Qualities of the Qur'an

And know that this Qur'an is an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads, and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Qur'an but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution - addition in his .guidance and elimination in his (spiritual) blindness

You should also know that no one will need any thing after (guidance from) the Qur'an and no one will be free from want before (guidance from) the Qur'an. Therefore, seek cure from

it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely, unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt, and misguidance. Pray to Allah through it and turn to Allah with its love. Do not ask the people through it. There (is nothing like it through which the people should turn to Allah, the Sublime.(۱)

The Du'a, supplication to God

point

Supplications and prayers (du'a) focus on the idea that human beings are in constant need of God. Even those who reach the peak of wealth, knowledge, strength, and dignity still are in need of God. The word du'a itself means to call out to God, and du'a is of equal importance to those inflicted by calamities and hardships and to those .living in comfort and abundance

Speaking with Allah through du'a defends against adversity and tribulation and leads to salvation and relief. Islam encourages its followers to offer du'a constantly, either using their own words, directly from the heart, or else repeating some of the beautiful words that have been left behind by the Prophet (S) and his successors (peace be .(upon them

:Allah has guaranteed His servants that He will answer their prayers

When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close to them. I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls upon Me. Let them also with a will listen to My (call and believe in Me that they walk in the right way. (۲:۱۸۶

(And your Lord says, "Call on me, I will answer your prayer." (۴۰:۶۰

Du'a Kumayl

A man

.Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), sermon ۱۷۶ -۱

named Kumayl ibn Ziyad once asked Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) for a way to approach Allah. In response, Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) gave him this prayer and told him to recite it every day, if he could, or else once a week, or even once a year - and if reciting it once a year was too difficult, then to recite it at least once in his :lifetime. Muslims usually recite it once a week together on Thursday night

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

,O Allah, I ask You by Your Mercy which embraces all things

By Your Strength, through which You dominate all things, towards which all things are ;humble, and before which all things are lowly

;By Your Invincibility, through which You overwhelm all things

;By Your Might, which nothing can resist

;By Your Greatness, which has filled all things

;By Your Power, which towers over all things

;By Your Face, which subsists after annihilation of all things

;By Your Names, which have filled the foundations of all things

By Your Knowledge, which encompasses all things; and

!By the Light of Your Face, through which all things are illumined

!O Light! O All-Holy

!O First of the first and Last of the Last

!O Allah, forgive me the sins which tear apart safeguards

!O Allah, forgive me the sins which bring down adversities

!O Allah, forgive me the sins which alter blessings

!O Allah, forgive me the sins which hold back supplication

!O Allah, forgive me the sins which dash all hopes

O Allah, forgive me the sins which

!bring about tribulation

!O Allah, forgive me ever sin I have committed and every mistake I have made

O Allah, verily I seek nearness to You through remembrance of You, I seek intercession

from You with Yourself, and I ask You through Your Munificence, to bring me nearer

to Your Mercy, to bless me with gratitude to You and to inspire me with Your

....remembrance

Part ۴: Other Islamic Issues

(Leadership of the Muslims after Prophet Muhammad (S

:The Qur'an emphasizes the role and significance of leadership in Islam. Allah states

And remember the day on which we will call together all human beings with their" (leaders (imams)."(۱۷:۷۱

Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (S) was very keen on appointing a successor after :(himself by the command of his Lord. Allah commands the Prophet (S

O Prophet! Proclaim what has been revealed to you from your Lord [the succession" of Imam 'Ali], for if you do not, you will not have conveyed His message, and Allah will (protect you from the people." (۵:۶۷

This event has been remembered as the event of Ghadir Khum, which was the name of a place intersecting Makkah and Madina, and occurred when the Prophet (S) was concluding his hajj rites and heading back with ۱۱۰,۰۰۰ companions. When he received the command of Allah, he immediately appointed Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) as his :successor after his death. In approval, the Qur'an says

This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor on you, and" (have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (۵:۳

All the companions of the Prophet (S) paid allegiance to Imam 'Ali (peace

.(be upon him) and accepted him as the first caliph after the Holy Prophet (S

However, only ۷۰ days after this monumental incident, the Prophet Muhammad (S) left this life, and the first setback to his teachings occurred when the Muslims did not honor their allegiance to Allah to accept Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) as the first .caliph

Confusion and disarray overtook the Muslims regarding who should succeed the Prophet (S) as leader of the Muslim community. In a hasty meeting at Saqifa Bani Sa'ida in Madina, Abu Bakr assumed leadership (۶۳۲-۶۳۴), followed by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (۶۳۴-۶۴۴), 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (۶۴۴-۶۵۶), and finally 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (۶۵۶-۶۶۱).

After the khilafa of 'Ali (peace be upon him), two dynasties followed -- the Umayyids .and the Abbasids -- before massive political changes overtook the Islamic world

Social Life in Islam

Islam places tremendous emphasis on the social aspect of life. The Islamic practices have not only spiritual dimensions but also social ones. For example, Islam encourages people to perform their daily prayers in congregation; Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: "One prayer of a man in congregation is worthier than his forty years of prayers at home alone."(۱)

Praying in congregation strengthens the ties between people by giving them the opportunity to interact with each other and discuss their issues in a holy place. Once a blind man came to the Prophet (S) and said that there was no one to take him to the .mosque to attend the congregational prayer

Prophet Muhammad (S) told him to stretch

.Mustadrak al-wasaa'il, vol. ۶ p. ۴۴۶ -۱

a thread from his house to the mosque and use it to go to the mosque to attend the congregational prayer. Similarly, fasting has many social aspects: it causes Muslims to feel the starvation and the agony of the poor and deprived in society and encourages .them to extend their hands in help towards them

The hajj undoubtedly is the largest religious and social convention bringing millions of people from around the globe into one arena to strengthen their ties, develop their .skills, and exchange ideas and opinions as to how to improve their situations

Khums and zakaat (charity)also play an important social role in Islam by causing Muslims to think that they themselves are responsible for bridging the gap between the rich and the poor as well as for sharing their own wealth with the needy and .disadvantaged in society

Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is a social responsibility which falls on the shoulders of each and every individual in the Islamic society to promote goodness, kindness, peace and justice and to fight oppression, corruption, and evil. Therefore, .Islam is truly a social religion

Marriage and Family Life

Another aspect of Islamic sociality is marriage and establishing families. Islam encourages its followers to get married and avoid celibacy; Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: "The person who marries gains half of his faith; then he must fear of Allah for the next remaining half."(١) In another saying, the Holy Prophet has said: "He who wishes to be clean and purified when he meets Allah should marry

---

١- Al-Kafi, vol. ٥ p. ٣٢٨.

(and have a spouse."(١

:The Qur'an describes the union between man and woman

And among His signs is that he created for you spouses from among yourselves that" you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts. Verily, in that are signs for those who reflect." (٣٠:٢١

This verse establishes the three pillars of a successful marriage. First, it should provide emotional and social shelter ("dwell in tranquility") whereby the husband and the wife find stability and financial, spiritual, emotional, and social security. The second pillar of a successful marriage is the love between the spouses. Marriage which is not based on love is apt to fail at any time. And the third pillar is the mercy between the spouses which leads to mutual understanding, appreciation, respect, .and care for each other

Although heavily discouraged, divorce is permissible in Islam. It exists as a safety valve for a failed marriage which has no possibility of progress or development. Allah does not want a couple to remain in misery and sustain emotional, physical, and financial damage. Thus, Allah explains the laws and rules of divorce in a chapter of the (Qur'an called "Divorce."(٢

Islam encourages reconciliation between the spouses, and their families and friends have the responsibility to help them with this as much as possible, but if this process ultimately fails then the last resort is divorce. After divorce, there is a waiting period for women to consider their life and the fate of their

---

.Man laa yahduruhu al-faqih, vol. ٣ p. ٣٨۵ -١

.At-Talaq/Chapter ۶۵ -٢

children. Most people go back to their spouses sometime during this waiting period, but if it elapses and the two people show no interest in returning to each other, then .the divorce will be finalized

Part of Islamic social life is to have regard for kinship; he who wishes his sustenance to be increased and his death day to be delayed should pay attention to his kinsfolk. :Kindness and respect for one's parents holds a high place in Islam

The Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents, whether one or both of them attains old age in your life. Say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor, and out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and say, "My Lord, bestow on them Thy (mercy, even as they cherished me in childhood." (۲۳:۲۴

Respect and kindness towards parents is as important as worship. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "He who glares at his parents with wrathful eyes, although they have been unjust to him, Allah will not accept his prayers unless he (repents."(۱

Respecting one's mother is particularly important; the Prophet (S) said: "Treat kindly your mother. Treat kindly your mother. Treat kindly your mother, and be kind to your (father."(۲

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has narrated: He who wishes Allah, Almighty and Glorious, to lighten the agonies of death should have regard for his kinship

---

.Al-Kafi, ۲:۱۶۲ -۱

.Safinat al-bihar, vol. ۲ p. ۵۵۳ -۲

and treat his parents with goodness. Then Allah will make the agonies of death easy for him, and he will not be stricken by poverty in his life at all.(۱)

In general, human beings should all serve one another whether they are related or not. Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: "He who decreases a grief out of the agonies for his Muslim brother, Allah will decrease for him a grief out of the agonies of the hereafter."(۲)

He (S) also said: "People are the dependants of Allah for sustenance. So the most beloved person with Allah is the one who is helpful to the dependents of Allah and makes the family members of a house happy."(۳)

As a social responsibility, Islam also encourages its followers to help the needy; Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: Whoever satiates a hungry believer so that the one is satisfied fully, neither a human being among people nor a near-stationed angel nor a divine messenger knows how great his reward is in the Hereafter except Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

And he also said: Feeding a hungry Muslim is among the means of forgiveness.(۴)

Even those who are not indigent should still be helped in any way possible: "He who is referred to by his Muslim brother [to borrow] but does not give him a loan, Allah will forbid him from entering Paradise on the day when the righteous will be recompensed."(۵)

Women in Islam

Islam equalizes men and women on the following issues: creation,

---

۱- Shahab al-Akbar, p. ۱۹۴.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, ۲:۳۴۹.

۳- al-Kafi, vol. ۲ p. ۱۶۴ .

۴- al-Kafi, vol. ۲ p. ۲۰۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۶ p. ۳۶۹ -۵

religious obligations, honor and dignity. However, there are natural differences in the peculiarities of each gender. The female as a mother differs in her personality and peculiarities from the man as a father. For each one of them, there is a specified .message in life

The Holy Qur'an declares that men and women are born equal. It gives women such rights as owning property, engaging in businesses, choosing a husband, claiming inheritance, receiving education, and being treated with respect. An entire chapter of the Qur'an (chapter ۴) discusses women's' rights in the society. It starts by addressing people: "O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and ".He created its mate out of it, and from them both He created many men and women

:Some of the verses equalizing men and women are as follows

There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and (those nearest related, whether the property be small or large (۵:۷

O You who believe, you are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, and live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and that Allah brings through it a great deal of (good. (۴:۱۹

For men there is reward for what they have earned, and for women there is reward (for what they have earned. (۴:۳۲

Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he or she is a true

believer, verily to him We will give a good life in this world, with respect, contentment, and lawful provision, and We shall certainly pay them a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do. (۱۶:۹۷)

Islam grants women full political, financial, social, and educational rights in society. Women have the right to vote in Islam, and to participate in the democratic process.

"O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give you political and religious allegiance... then accept their allegiance, and ask Allah to forgive them; verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful." (۶۰:۱۲)

Women should also have the full right to choose their own husbands without pressure or intimidation. Arranged marriages in the sense of women being dragged into marriages that they are unaware of or dislike are unlawful in Islam.

Women have the right to participate in the educational and cultural activities as well as religious and spiritual endeavors. No field is closed to women unless it interferes with their dignity, respect, and chastity in society.

Therefore, Islam does forbid women to display their attractions and physical appearance in society and calls for modesty and conservatism in their behavior and dress, as well as loyalty to the family, ideals which Islam also enjoins upon men as well. Women are instructed to cover modestly which includes covering the hair as well as the rest of the body except the hands and the face.(۱)

Human Rights in Islam

Islam has laid down fundamental, universal rights for humanity which are to be observed and respected in

---

۱- Qur'an ۳۳:۵۹, ۳۳:۵۳, and ۲۴:۳۱.

all circumstances. These rights are those which were specified and granted by Allah and apply to all human beings, not just Muslims. An integral part of the Islamic faith is to accept, recognize, and enforce these human rights. The verdict in the Qur'an is :unequivocal for those who fail to do so

(Those who do not judge by what God has sent down are the disbelievers." (۵:۴۴"

The rights guaranteed by Islam and the Qur'an include: the right to life, the right to safety, respect for women's honor and dignity, the right to a basic standard of life, the right to individual freedom, the right to justice, and the inherent equality of human .beings

(Mosques (masaajid

Mosques are places of worship used by Muslims. Islam encourages people to perform their prayers in mosques and also encourages people to participate in building mosques. Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: "Whoever builds a mosque, Allah will build ".for him a house in Paradise

The mosque plays a vital role in Muslim life; in addition to the five daily congregational prayers and the recommended prayers, the mosque also accommodates Muslims during the Friday noon prayers and on the 'eid, holidays. Therefore, the mosque is considered a sacred place, and it should not be sold or defiled, and men and women .who are ritually impure may not enter

The first mosque built by Prophet Muhammad (S) was called Qoba'a and was located in the outskirts in the city of Madina, while the first house of worship built on earth ,was al-masjid al-haram

the sacred mosque in Makkah. This mosque is the holiest of the mosques, the second holiest being the Prophet's Mosque in Madina which was built after the Prophet's .migration from Makkah to Madina

Mosques have many distinctive features. There are the musallah, or prayer hall; the minbar, or pulpit, where the preacher or imam stands to deliver his sermon; the mihrab, the niche which faces the direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah (al-qiblah); and .also there are minarets and domes from which the call to prayers is raised

Before entering mosques, the shoes must be removed, and women should be dressed conservatively (this includes covering the head). Neither men nor women should carry on loud conversations inside. Mosques belong to Allah, not to specific :individuals, families, communities, or tribes

(And the mosques are for Allah alone, so invoke not anyone along with Allah." (۷۲:۱۸"

:And Allah encourages people to construct and fill mosques

The mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the" last day, perform prayers, and give zakaat and fear none but Allah. It is they who (surely are on true guidance." (۹:۱۸

Hence, barring people from conducting their worshipping in the mosque is considered :a grave sin in Islam

And who is more unjust than those who forbid that Allah's name be glorified and" (mentioned much in Allah's mosques and strive for their ruin?" (۲:۱۱۴

:Allah exists everywhere and throughout all time, and the Qur'an states

To Allah belong the East and the West, so wherever you turn your face"

(there is the face of Allah." (۲:۱۱۵

Nevertheless, as a sign of unity Muslims are instructed to face the qiblah, the direction .of the Ka'bah in Makkah, during prayer

Islamic Law and Punishment

Before speaking of the law and punishment in Islam, many premises must be introduced regarding Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic ideology stipulates that Allah is the main source of Islamic law. These laws were revealed to all divine messengers in different eras and geographical places in accordance with the intellectual progress of the various societies, and reached their perfection through the Holy Qur'an which carries a universal message for mankind. Therefore, the Islamic law is not bound by time and place and is designed to cater to the different needs of the human race until .eternity

The Islamic law of punishment is based on prevention, not retribution - meaning that Islam cares to prevent criminal acts before they happen and disrupt the peace of society. These laws are dynamic, everlasting, and not bound by individualistic interests. They take into consideration the general interest of society. Allah speaks :about the punishment of the criminals by saying

O you who believe, the law of equality in punishment is prescribed for you in case of" murder, but if the killer is forgiven by the relatives of the killed against blood money, then adhering to it with fairness and payment of the blood money to the heir should (be made in fairness. This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord." (۲:۱۷۸

Although Islam tries to combat crime and terror with

full seriousness, it leave room for mercy and forgiveness, emphasizing the human .nature of people and that they should learn mercy and forgiveness from their Lord

However, Islam has to be introduced as a whole to the people, and to incorporate Islam in all aspects of life, not only in the judicial system. Islam invites the rulers and the subjects alike to spread social justice, equality, and distribution of wealth in society. Once every individual in society has adequate food, shelter, clothing, and opportunities for work, education, and marriage and the gap between the haves and the have-nots has been bridged - then if an individual or group of people tries to jeopardize the safety and security of society and terrorize the people, then in this case Islam would stand firmly in their face and the law of punishment would be .exercised

p: ۸۴

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲
Commerce and sale: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹
Users' affairs: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Introduction of the Center – Ghaemiyeh Digital Library


Center of Computer
Researches
Ghaemiyeh
Isfahan
WWW
For Getting Other Professional Libraries,
refer to the Center Address Please:
www.Ghaemiyeh.com
www.Ghaemiyeh.net
www.Ghaemiyeh.org
www.Ghaemiyeh.ir
For Order, Connect us:
0913 2000 109